



Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Zoom/Board Room (Hybrid) – 3008 Fifth Avenue, Port Alberni, BC

1:30 PM

Regular Agenda

Watch the meeting live at: <https://www.acrd.bc.ca/events/12-3-2026/>

Register to participate via Zoom Webinar at:

https://acrd-bc-ca.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jHQoXsN4RKgKmpdDnd_IGw#/registration

PAGE #

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Recognition of Territories.

Notice to attendees and delegates that this meeting is being recorded and livestreamed to YouTube on the Regional District Website.

Introductions - Board Members and Staff present in the Boardroom and on Zoom.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

(motion to approve, including late items requires ALL VOTE 2/3 majority vote)

3. **DECLARATIONS**

(conflict of interest or gifts exceeding \$250 in value as per section 106 of the Community Charter)

4. **INVITED PRESENTATIONS**

5. **DELEGATIONS (10 minute maximum)**

6. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- a. **Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting – Tuesday, December 16, 2025**

3-5

THAT the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 be adopted.

7. PUBLIC INPUT PERIOD

(15 minutes total. Public will be permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes on an agenda item. No video, use of presentations, handouts, or props are permitted. Virtual attendees, raise your hand in Zoom to request to speak. In-person attendees, raise your hand to request to speak.

8. CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION

9. CORRESPONDENCE FOR ACTION

10. REQUEST FOR DECISION REPORTS

a. REQUEST FOR DECISION

6-13

Preferred Emergency Route Summary

THAT the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend to the ACRD Board of Directors that Routes 1A, 1B and 4, identified in the July 2025 Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) report 'Highway 4 Emergency Detour Route Options', be endorsed as the ACRD's primary emergency access routes for discussion with community partners.

11. REPORTS

12. OTHER BUSINESS (including Late Items)

Late Items are defined as matters arising after the preparation of the agenda which, if not acted upon in a timely manner, would prejudice or compromise either the Regional District's position or the position of a constituent or group of constituents.

13. QUESTION PERIOD

(15 minutes total. Public will be permitted to ask questions for up to 3 minutes on an agenda item. No video, use of presentations, handouts, or props are permitted. Virtual attendees, raise your hand in Zoom to request to speak. In-person attendees, raise your hand to request to speak).

14. ADJOURN



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2025, 1:30 PM

Hybrid - Zoom/Board Room, 3008 Fifth Avenue, Port Alberni, BC

MEMBERS

Bob Beckett, Chairperson, Director, Electoral Area "A" Bamfield

PRESENT:

Mike Sparrow, Director, Electoral Area "F" Cherry Creek

Cindy Solda, Councillor, City of Port Alberni

Marilyn McEwen, Director, Mayor, District of Ucluelet

Dan Law, Mayor, District of Tofino

Colin Koszman, Land Use Forester, Mosaic Forest Management

Michael Pearson, District Manager, Transportation, Vancouver Island,
Ministry of Transportation & Transit

Dean Fauchon, Manager, Contract Services, Tsawak-qin Forestry

John McNabb, Member at Large

Arne Elias, Director, Port Alberni Port Authority

Jolleen Dick, Chief Executive Officer, Alberni Valley Chamber of
Commerce

Marcie Dewitt, Alberni-Clayoquot Health Network

Ken McRae, Member at Large

Tiffany Olsen, Executive Director, Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of
Commerce

REGRETS:

Levana Mastrangelo, Director, Executive Legislature, Yuułu?if?ath
Government

Brandy Lauder, Chief Councillor, Hupacasath First Nation

Judith Sayers, President, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

Ken Watts, Chief Councillor, Tseshaht First Nation

Josh Jenkins, Executive Director, Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce

OTHERS PRESENT

Jim MacDonald, Director of Infrastructure Services, City of Port Alberni

STAFF PRESENT:

Daniel Sailland, Chief Administrative Officer

Mike Irg, Special Projects Director

Kristin Kerr-Donohue, Administrative Assistant

The meeting can be viewed on the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District website at:

<https://www.acrd.bc.ca/events/16-12-2025/7757/?catid=0>

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Vice-Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

The Vice-Chairperson recognized this meeting is being held throughout the Nuu-chah-nulth territories.

The Chairperson reported this meeting is being recorded and livestreamed to YouTube on the Regional District website.

Introductions - Committee Members and Staff present in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED: J. McNabb

SECONDED: C. Solda

THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. DECLARATIONS

4. MINUTES

a. Transportation Advisory Committee Minutes – November 5, 2025

MOVED: C. Solda

SECONDED: K. McRae

THAT the minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting held on November 5, 2025 be adopted.

CARRIED

5. PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

6. CORRESPONDENCE FOR ACTION/INFORMATION

7. REQUEST FOR DECISIONS

a. Request for Decision regarding ACRD Secondary Route and Emergency Route Engagement Strategy

T. Olsen joined the meeting at 2:00 PM

MOVED: J. McNabb

SECONDED: C. Solda

THAT the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend the ACRD Board of Directors;

- 1. Approve the lobbying strategy and direct staff to implement immediate next steps as identified in the December 16, 2025, report.*

2. Allocate the identified staff time in the 2026 budget to create a vision consensus toward achieving a coordinated regional lobbying effort to request the Province of BC to:

- a. Establish an emergency access route as an immediate priority;
- b. Continue a phased approach for a viable secondary access road/highway that is open year-round.

CARRIED

8. REPORTS

- a. Discussion for next meeting date in 2026 (Verbal) – M. Irg
February meeting recommended.

9. LATE BUSINESS

10. QUESTION PERIOD

Questions/Comments from the public. The Administrative Assistant advised there were no questions or comments respecting an agenda topic from public:

- Participating in Person in the ACRD Board Room
- Participating in the Zoom webinar
- Submissions received by email at responses@acrd.bc.ca.

11. ADJOURN

MOVED: J. McNabb

SECONDED: C. Solda

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 2:37 PM.

CARRIED

Certified Correct:

Mike Sparrow,
Vice-Chairperson

Kristin Kerr-Donohue,
Administrative Assistant



To: ACRD Transportation Committee
From: Mike Irg, Special Projects Director
Meeting Date: March 12, 2026
Subject: Preferred Emergency Route Summary

Recommendation:

THAT the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend to the ACRD Board of Directors that Routes 1A, 1B and 4, identified in the July 2025 Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) report 'Highway 4 Emergency Detour Route Options', be endorsed as the ACRD's primary emergency access routes for discussion with community partners.

Desired Outcome:

Phase one, immediate establishment of a permanent emergency route that can be activated on short notice, available year-round, with a maintenance plan for all weather conditions (including ice/snow clearing and dust mitigation) and is rural road standard capable of accommodating large commercial transport vehicles and all types of passenger vehicles. Phase two, work towards upgrading the route to become a permanent secondary year-round road.

Summary:

The Transportation Committee and the ACRD Board have supported the following priorities for 2026.

1. Draft a summary review report that identifies the top choice for an emergency route that could also be upgraded, in phases, to become a permanent alternative highway route into the Alberni Valley.
2. Present the report to all partners across the region, in accordance with their preferred approach (e.g., letter, and/or delegation to council/board meeting, etc.).
3. Achieve a shared letter of support from all partners for advancing with a single preferred route.
4. Hire a lobbying consultancy to coordinate the efforts of the region toward achieving the agreed upon vision of the alternative route.

The primary recommendation of this report is to identify and establish the most effective, reliable, and accessible emergency route for the ACRD region. As planning progresses toward developing a permanent alternative corridor, it will be essential to consider both the capital and long-term maintenance costs, as well as the implications for smaller communities that currently rely on this route for everyday access. In addition, the broader economic benefits of a permanent secondary route, improved supply chain reliability, tourism resilience, and reduced economic losses during closures,

should be incorporated into the decision-making process. The increasing frequency and severity of climate-related events, such as wildfires, flooding, slope failures, and extreme weather, must also be factored in, as these hazards will continue to affect the reliability of the region's transportation network and intensify the need for a climate-resilient alternative route.

Given the accelerating impacts of climate change, evidenced by more frequent wildfires, extreme precipitation, and slope instability, the development of a secondary route must include climate-resilient engineering, enhanced drainage capacity, slope stabilization, and wildfire mitigation strategies to ensure year-round reliability.

A permanent secondary route would generate substantial long-term economic benefits not only for the Alberni Valley but also for major west-coast destinations such as Tofino and Ucluelet—regions that collectively experienced more than \$60 million in losses during the 2023 Highway 4 closure—and for smaller, road-dependent communities such as Bamfield, Anacla, and the Ditidaht community at Nitinaht Lake, all of whom rely on this corridor for access to essential services, employment, education, tourism, and supply deliveries. By creating a reliable alternate transportation link, the secondary route would strengthen supply-chain stability, reduce closure-related economic disruption, enhance tourism resilience, and support the long-term sustainability of community life and local economies across the entire west coast of Vancouver Island.

Rational for Route Options 1A, 1B, and 4 (Maps Attached as Appendix B)

The July 2025 Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) report "Highway 4 Emergency Detour Route Options," [Highway 4 - Emergency Detour Route Options](#) identifies several potential emergency-access corridors between Port Alberni and the east/south-Island highway network. This report examines the three most viable route options—1A, 1B, and 4—each with distinct characteristics, constraints, and potential engineering considerations. This section provides a balanced comparison.

Option 1A – Port Alberni → Bamfield Main → Nitinaht → Youbou → Hwy 18

Route 1A is the only corridor that has previously operated as a public emergency detour, having been used during the 2023 Cameron Bluffs wildfire. According to the MOTT study, Route 1A aligns closely with several viability thresholds related to grades, elevation, and available two-lane width. However, slope-sensitive areas along Cowichan Main require further geotechnical review to ensure year-round accessibility.

Key Characteristics:

- Proven operational performance (~20% of Highway 4 traffic during 2023 closure)
- Approximate travel time: 2.5 hours over 149 km
- Very limited length of steep grades (>8% over <0.2 km)
- Approximately 87.2 km of hard-surface roadway
- Lower elevation profile (~311 m) compared with other alternatives
- Potential suitability for all vehicles with future improvements
- Offers potential redundancy during Highway 19 disruptions (e.g., Nanoose area)

Option 1B – Port Alberni → Bamfield Main → Nitinaht → South Shore Road (Honeymoon Bay) → Hwy 18

Route 1B follows the same alignment as 1A from Port Alberni through Bamfield Main to the Nitinaht Lake area. However, instead of continuing north toward Youbou, Option 1B proceeds southeast along

the south shore of Cowichan Lake on South Shore Road before reaching Honeymoon Bay and Highway 18.

Key Characteristics:

- Travel time of approximately 2.5 hours over 129 km
- Hard surface: 74.5 km; Gravel surface: 54.5 km
- Greater total length of steep grades (>8% over ~7 km)
- More gravel and variable forest-road conditions compared with 1A
- Several sections suitable primarily for high-clearance or pickup-type vehicles
- Not used as an official emergency detour during the 2023 wildfire event
- Additional tenure and coordination requirements south of Cowichan Lake
- Offers potential redundancy during Highway 19 disruptions (e.g., Nanoose area)

Option 4 – Horne Lake Connector → Highway 19

Route 4 connects Port Alberni northward to Highway 19 via the Horne Lake corridor. Previous assessments describe steep grades, unstable slopes, and limited two-lane width along this route. Significant reconstruction would be required to bring this corridor to an operable emergency-use standard, and it does not directly support west-coast First Nations communities or coastal settlements.

Key Characteristics:

- Very steep and geotechnically sensitive terrain
- Major reconstruction would be required
- Limited suitability for commercial or emergency vehicles in current condition
- Does not serve Ditidaht, Bamfield, Anacla, or Huu-ay-aht communities
- No history of emergency detour use

Comparative Summary:

Each of the three routes presents distinct operational considerations, terrain conditions, and community impacts. Route 1A has the most documented operational experience and favorable geometry but includes slope-sensitive areas potentially requiring mitigation. Route 1B provides an alternative south-lake alignment but includes more gravel, steeper grades, and less consistent vehicle suitability. Route 4 offers a northern connection to Highway 19 but requires extensive reconstruction and does not directly support west-coast or mid-Island communities. Further engineering, economic analysis, and community engagement will be required to determine the most appropriate emergency-access solution.

Background:

As highlighted in previous reports, the Alberni-Clayoquot region currently relies on a single primary highway for access. This creates significant vulnerability during emergencies, natural disasters, or prolonged closures which impacts public safety, economic stability, and community resilience.

The Transportation Committee and the ACRD Board have supported the following priorities for 2026, with the first step being this summary report.

1. Draft a summary review report that identifies the top choices for an emergency route that could also be upgraded, in phases, to become a permanent alternative highway route into the Alberni Valley.
2. Present the report to all partners across the region, in accordance with their preferred approach (e.g., letter, and/or delegation to council/board meeting, etc.).

3. Achieve a shared letter of support from all partners for advancing with a single preferred route.
4. Hire a lobbying consultancy to coordinate the efforts of the region toward achieving the agreed upon vision of the alternative route.

The approved Coordinated Lobbying Strategy is attached as Appendix A and includes the partners who will be contacted.

Time Requirements – Staff & Elected Officials:

Approximately 190 hours of ACRD staff time will be required for steps 1 to 4. This assumes an average of 10 hours per government in the region for discussion, delegation and feedback (10 First Nations and 3 Municipalities is 130 hours); ongoing reports, attendance and coordination of Transportation Advisory Committee meetings (40 hours); general administration to include RFP drafting, issuance and review (20 hours). Once a consultant is hired for the coordination of a lobbying effort, a revised estimate of additional time would be prepared, and this would include estimates for elected officials, staff, and committee members to lobby senior levels of government for the needed road access.

Financial:

The ACRD Board has assigned \$75,000 toward this initiative. The cost associated with the development of an alternate route (emergency or permanent) has yet to be identified.

Strategic Plan Implications:

The ACRD 2024-2027 Strategic Plan identifies “alternative and emergency routes including but not limited to Highway 4” as an objective in section 4.1 Strategic Advocacy.

Policy or Legislation:

The Ministry of Transportation and Transit is responsible for all Highways in BC and all roads outside of incorporated municipalities. Of note is that most all identified alternative routes being discussed are a mix of private and provincial ownership. This adds complexity and possible cost to this initiative.

Options Considered:

1. Select alternative routes as preferred options.
2. Do not proceed with the recommendation.

Submitted by: Michael Irg
Mike Irg, MCIP, RPP, Special Projects Director

Approved by: Daniel Sailland
Daniel Sailland, MBA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Coordinated Lobbying Strategy

Strategic Objectives

Primary Objective: Secure provincial commitment to establish an emergency access route and initiate planning for a year-round secondary access highway.

Secondary Objective: Secure a provincially led planning program for a viable secondary access corridor.

Vision Consensus (January - July 2026)

In order to build consensus around a shared preferred route, the ACRD will draft a summary review report that includes references to past and current studies, identifies the top choices for an emergency route that could also be upgraded, in phases, to become a permanent alternative highway route into the Alberni Valley. Once the report and plan are received and endorsed by the Board, the ACRD will schedule and present the report to all partners across the region, in accordance with their preferred approach (e.g., letter, and/or delegation to council/board meetings, etc.).

Core partners include local governments (Port Alberni, Tofino, Ucluelet), First Nations (Hupacasath, Tseshaht, Huu-ay-aht, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ, Toquaht, Uchucklesaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Hesquiaht), Chambers of Commerce, Port Authority, and industry stakeholders.

Adhering to the requests and guidance provided by core partners, the ACRD will request and coordinate a shared letter of support from all partners for advancing with a single preferred route.

Lobbying Preparation, Target Audiences & Decision Pathways (April – August 2026)

Upon completion of the signed letter of support, the ACRD will seek the support of a lobbying consultancy that will help develop a plan of action for lobbying appropriate decision-making bodies including but not limited to: Ministry of Transportation and Transit, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Premier's Office, Treasury Board, and Emergency Management BC.

Allied Forums: UBCM/AVICC for resolutions and province-wide support.

Core Messages

- Safety & Resilience: Redundant access is essential for emergency response.
- Economic Imperative: Highway 4 disruptions cost \$60M+ per event, and new economic opportunities working with First Nations economic visions.
- Co-development & Reconciliation: Align with DRIPA and UNDRIP principles.
- Readiness: Emergency detour route activation within hours.

Tactics & Workplan

- A. Policy & Technical Prep: Unified brief, route options scan, DRIPA engagement plan.
- B. Political Advocacy: Minister meetings, UBCM resolutions, media outreach.
- C. Secondary Route Program: Feasibility studies, funding strategy.

Lobbying Implementation (August 2026 – Time to be Determined): The lobbying efforts will be subject to the agreement of partners and endorsement of the ACRD Board. It is important to note that there may be changes based on the direction of other partnering governments whose territories and/or

jurisdictions are directly impacted or influenced. This overview is a high-level plan of approach that is expected to change based on the feedback received by partners.

Immediate Next Steps

- 1) Draft a summary review report that identifies the top choices for an emergency route and alternative highway route into the Alberni Valley;
- 2) Present the report to ACRD Board and all partners across the region;
- 3) Achieve a shared letter of support from all partners for advancing with a single preferred route;
- 4) Hire a lobbying consultancy to coordinate the efforts;
- 5) Send coordinated letter to Minister; and
- 6) Draft UBCM/AVICC resolution.

Appendix B



